



Senator Feinstein Urges President Bush to Push for Renewal of Assault Weapons Ban

Senator Feinstein: "Silence is not support."

March 11, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) today released a letter to President Bush urging him to publicly support renewing the assault weapons ban before it expires on September 13, 2004.

Although the President made a campaign commitment to support the assault weapons ban and his office says he continues to support the ban, the President has remained silent. "Silence is not support," Feinstein said.

In a letter to President Bush dated March 10, Senator Feinstein wrote, "You have consistently stated your support for reauthorizing current law, and this is precisely what our bill does – nothing more."

During the recent debate on a measure to protect gun manufacturers and dealers from lawsuits, the Senate approved an amendment to renew the assault weapons ban for an additional ten years. However, the White House opposed the effort, stating that it wanted a "clean" bill without amendments. And the NRA helped kill the underlying bill.

The full text of the letter follows:

"I am writing to request your assistance in moving S.2109, Feinstein-Warner-Schumer-DeWine legislation to reauthorize the federal assault weapons ban for an additional ten years. The ban will sunset on September 13 unless we quickly act to renew it, and we need your help.

You have consistently stated your support for reauthorizing current law, and this is precisely what our bill does – nothing more. This week, the Senate passed our measure with 52 votes, including ten Republicans. Three fourths of the American people support renewing the ban, as do two thirds of gun owners. Your own Justice Department has indicated that the ban has worked to reduce the number of banned assault weapons traced to crime. And virtually every major law enforcement organization in the nation supports renewing the ban.

Despite this overwhelming support, your Administration has been largely silent on the issue this year, when your voice is most needed. Indeed, to my great disappointment, when your Administration actually weighed in on the first assault weapons vote in the

Senate in almost ten years, it was to warn *against* our bipartisan amendment to renew the ban when we offered it to legislation that would grant sweeping and unprecedented immunity to reckless gun dealers and negligent gun manufacturers.

Recently, you have been traveling the country urging Congress to renew controversial provisions of the Patriot Act that don't sunset until December of *next year*. Meanwhile, if you remain silent on assault weapons, the federal assault weapons ban will expire more than a year earlier than those Patriot Act provisions. Put bluntly, we need you to keep your promise to the American people and help us to once again enact this ban into law before it expires just over six months from now. Silence is not support."

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